Highlighting Inclusive Access at San Jacinto College, from pilot to full-scale implementation

BRIEF SUMMARY

Key Findings

- Tasked with putting San Jacinto College's mission of providing equity for all students into action, the Open Books Plus program is helping students minimize their college costs.
- Successful implementation of the program is the result of multiple departments working as partners, all with distinct responsibilities that are coordinated, but not duplicated.
- In Spring 2019, 49 sections were offered with Inclusive Access; by Summer 2019, the number increased to 129 sections, and in Fall 2019, San Jacinto College expects more than 750 sections, exhibiting growth of over 1300% in just two semesters.

Summary

The successful implementation of Pearson Inclusive Access at San Jacinto College began with top-down support and dedicated individuals in multiple departments working collectively to create a cohesive program with the goal of helping students save money on their course materials. Each team had defined roles that adapted as the program evolved and expanded. Beginning with a small pilot allowed those responsible to manage the details and identify potential barriers and complications early. As the program matured, communication between the teams was critical, enabling problem resolution across departments as they scaled the program to include hundreds of instructors and thousands of students. Tasked with putting San Jacinto College's mission of providing equity for all students into action, the Open Books Plus program is helping students minimize their college costs. An ongoing campaign about the program's goal keeps the importance front of mind for all faculty.

Challenges & Goals

A core tenet of the mission and vision at San Jacinto College is to provide equity for all students, offering everyone an equal opportunity for success. This requires an understanding of all challenges and barriers students face in order to provide support and assistance to help overcome these obstacles. College costs are increasing, often creating difficult financial decisions for students. Leadership at San Jacinto College proactively sought solutions to eliminate the various economic barriers students face, and by 2017 had been encouraging faculty to consider alternative textbook and other course material options in order to lower these out-of-pocket student costs. By the Summer of 2018, San Jacinto College already had a program in place called Open Books to promote Open Educational Resources (OER); the Inclusive Access program offered instructors unable to find appropriate OER course materials another level of choice while still offering significant cost savings to students.

Implementation

> "Leadership at San Jacinto College was quick to act when they understood the savings that could be offered to students through this program."
> —Hilda Boyce, Director, Auxiliary Services, San Jacinto College

Hilda Boyce, Director, Auxiliary Services, learned about the Inclusive Access model during bookstore contract renewal conversations in Summer 2018. At the same time, Niki Whiteside, Vice President, Educational Technology, attended a presentation by another in-state community college about the success of their Inclusive Access program. Jointly, Boyce and Whiteside approached both the San Jacinto College Deputy Chancellor and

College President and the Vice Chancellor of Fiscal Affairs with the idea to pilot Inclusive Access as a cost savings program for course materials starting in Spring 2019. At that meeting, they were tasked with presenting the idea to the Board of Trustees in August 2018. With approval to move forward, Boyce and Whiteside quickly identified other departments at San Jacinto College whose assistance would be necessary for a successful implementation.

As part of a broader campus program to lower course material costs, it was determined that for a course to be included in the Inclusive Access pilot, the digital course materials must be either less than $100 or offer savings greater than 45% off the original price. It was also determined that working with just one publisher during the pilot would minimize potential problems, creating an environment of success on which they could build. The Inclusive Access pilot was branded at San Jacinto College as Open Books Plus, and 49 sections were offered in Spring 2019. By Summer 2019, the number had increased to 129 sections. In Fall 2019, the college expects more than 750 sections in Open Books Plus, exhibiting growth of over 1300% in just two semesters.

Because the pilot was small, not all potential problems were immediately identified. Boyce cautions that as the program matures, previously unexplored details have emerged, and growing pains are unavoidable. The key is to maintain relationships across all involved teams so that unexpected issues are prioritized and solutions are researched and implemented promptly. Successful implementation of Open Books Plus is the result of multiple departments working as partners, all with distinct responsibilities that are coordinated, but not duplicated.

AUXILIARY SERVICES
- Research how Inclusive Access was successfully implemented at other institutions
- Set up processes and procedures to initiate the pilot; make adjustments as program grows
- Coordinate roles of internal partners/departments involved in program
- Communicate with bookstore and publisher

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
- Recruit and train faculty to participate in the Spring 2019 pilot and beyond
- Coordinate communications around program processes and the responsibilities of involved parties
- Develop process to adopt Inclusive Access materials in conjunction with other departments

FISCAL AFFAIRS
- Ensure appropriate set up in the college student and accounting systems
- Partner with bookstore to develop the reporting requirements related to billing
- Communicate with and manage third party payers

MARKETING / PUBLIC RELATIONS
- Create the Open Books Plus program brand (in conjunction with other departments)
- Develop and implement Open Books Plus marketing communications plan
- Design and distribute graphics and marketing collateral

ON-CAMPUS BOOKSTORE
- Act as liaison to faculty and students
- Communicate with publisher for information and pricing accuracy
- Upload the course fee/course information to the school's Student Information System